

## California State Journal of Medicine.

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### IMPORTANT NOTICE

Notify the office promptly of any change of address, in order that mailing list and addresses in the Register may be corrected.

JUNE, 1904.

### EDITORIAL NOTES.

The secretary has already sent a letter to the secretary of each component society, giving notice of the action of the House of Delegates at the last meeting, on the matter of assessment for the next year. There seems to be some little misunderstanding as to the exact situation. The fiscal year of the State Society is from the end of one annual meeting to the end of the next annual meeting. The following extract from the minutes of the Board of Trustees, January 6, 1904, will probably clear up this matter somewhat: "Moved, that the assessment of county medical societies for the year April 24, 1903, to April 21, 1904, be fixed at one dollar (\$1) per member. Carried." Under the new constitution it became the duty of the House of Delegates to fix the amount of this assessment, and they did so at the second session, Wednesday, April 20, 1904, making the assessment for the year April 21, 1904, to April 20, 1905, two dollars (\$2) per member, thus increasing it over previous years. By resolution, unanimously carried, they also made one-half of this amount payable on or before July 1, 1904, and the balance payable on or before April 1, 1905. The reason for this action is simple. In order to build up the publications and make them eventually self-supporting, they must have advertising; in order to get this advertising, an advertising solicitor must be paid a commission on his work. The Register will be brought out about the middle of September, and the money must be available for paying commissions on the advertising secured *as it is turned in*

—that is, in June and July. All commissions are payable when the contracts are *accepted*, and *not*, as many suppose, when they are *paid for*. The State Society was giving too much for the money. The dues, even at \$2, are the lowest of any State Society in the country, so far as we are aware. This was agreed to, unanimously, by the delegates. County society secretaries should take this matter up at once and have a remittance for the amount (\$1 per member; one-half the assessment for the year ending April 20, 1905) sent to the office of the State Society as soon as possible. Work has already begun on the next edition of the Register, and contracts for advertising are now being brought in. Please do not delay in attending to the matter of this modest assessment.

At the Paso Robles meeting of the State Society the new Constitution and By-Laws, practically as recommended and with only minor alterations—mostly of phraseology—was adopted. This action is exceedingly important, for many reasons. The word "regular" was stricken from the document, and the personnel of the membership in county societies is placed absolutely in the hands of each county society. Every legally qualified practitioner of medicine who does not claim to practice any "pathy," should be eligible to membership. This does not mean that every county society must elect every physician, regular, homeopathic or eclectic, to membership. It simply means that each society shall judge for itself. Each component society should now take similar action and see that the word "regular" is dropped out of its organic law. If, then, two-thirds of the members in any county society wish to elect a legally qualified physician who does not claim to practice any special school of medicine, but whose license to practice is based upon a homeopathic or an eclectic degree, they may do so. The actual facts involved are broad and plain, easily understood and not liable to misconstruction. Hair-splitting, as an active pastime, should be relegated to the "calomel and jalap" days of the past, or the time of the millionth dilution.

We have recently received a letter from Dr. Van Zwalenburg, of Riverside, giving some information as to the hotel accommodations at the New Glenwood Hotel, Riverside, which was chosen as the place for the next meeting of the State Society. He states that at the time of our meeting at Paso Robles the New Glenwood Hotel could have accommodated 325 additional guests, one in a room, or 400 additional, two in a room where possible. The rates next year

will be \$2.50 per day for room without bath, and \$3 for room with bath; meals included. In addition to the accommodations at this hotel, other near-by hotels could have accommodated guests to the extent of some 200. It would appear from this showing that there will be ample and comfortable accommodations for from 500 to 600 members, and we sincerely trust that such accommodations will be entirely taken up. At the last meeting there were 128 members registered, and probably from 25 to 50 who did not register. With the friends and relatives of those in attendance, it is safe to say that there were at least 225 people at the meeting. Had there been ample accommodations, the number would undoubtedly have passed the 300 mark. Next year we should have at least 300, and there ought to be even more. The physicians of Riverside have already commenced their arrangements for the meeting, and the Committee on Program has outlined its work for the year and will almost at once begin active work upon the program. Everything promises for a far bigger and better meeting than the Society has ever before held.

The "newer materia medica," largely composed of synthetics and coal-tar derivatives, is both an interesting and a staggering problem. **SYNTHETIC REMEDIES.** Many men of excellent judgment and cool, far-seeing calculation, have expressed the opinion that these newer chemicals are the materia medica of the future, and that their introduction and use will go far toward making of medicine a more exact science. This may or may not be true. Unfortunately, time in large doses is required to determine the exact status of any remedy; to develop its peculiarities and eccentricities, its anomalies and idiosyncrasies. The chemistry of the last fifty years has busied itself very largely with the problems of synthesis, and the results have been truly astounding. If a chemical produced in the laboratory of man has the identical characteristics and physical properties of the product of nature's laboratory, it would seem to follow that it should have the same therapeutic action. Every argument of analogy and reason would indicate the identity of the two; yet there are clinical observers who claim inequality of therapeutic action. Are these claims based upon sound reason or upon prejudice; upon fact or fancy? The very great value of some of these newer chemicals cannot be disputed, though it is to be deplored that they are so absolutely controlled and owned by individual houses as to identify their recommendation with the commercial exploitation of business enterprise. While this is, in itself, antagonistic to one of the most deeply rooted principles of medical ethics, it remains a still more profound fact that the physi-

cian's first and paramount duty is to his patient, and that thing which will help his patient most is the thing which he should use. This, of course, is said only of definite chemicals; it goes without saying that he cannot tell whether any remedy the composition of which he does not know, will help or harm his patient; hence such should never be used under any circumstances.

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We, in the West, are greatly favored of Divine Providence in many ways. We are not quite so narrow-minded and hide-bound as some of our friends and professional relatives in the East, where, especially in New York, harmonious organization has been prevented for a number of years largely through the small and narrow-minded intellect of a few men. (That "few" is really poetic license; there are more than a "few.") When, at last, the condition of warfare due to hair-splitting extraordinary, and personal jealousy paramount, could no longer be tolerated by the majority, and amalgamation was forced, there only remained some of the journals of peculiar insignificance to mourn the coming of peace. That medical "bloody shirt," the code of ethics, now but a shred of its sometime self, is flaunted by the *Post Graduate* for April. It also takes exception to the *Association Journal* and quite approves of the silly stuff supposed to be "editorial" argument printed by the *Buffalo Medical Journal*, and commented on in our April issue. The *Post Graduate* thinks that the large medical weeklies will be willing to print all the "good papers," and perhaps all the papers (evidently they are not all "good," even in New York!), and then at the end of the year the moss-covered volume of "annual transactions" will be sent to each member. But if the papers—or at least the "good papers"—have been already printed, why go to the expense of issuing the volume? Nobody wants the papers that are not good. The poor old ostrich-like *Post Graduate* can see no use for a large organization, nor for a "great and permanent political and literary machine." A "permanent political machine" is just what a large number of physicians in this country, represented in the A. M. A., is striving heart and soul to bring about. The *Post Graduate* seems to think the whole movement of organization is the result of the attempt on the part of the secretary and editor of the *A. M. A. Journal*, and the editor of the *N. Y. Association Journal*, to continue themselves in salaried positions. Unless things have materially changed in New York, very recently, the editor of the *Association Journal* does not get enough salary to buy postage stamps with. It seems to take some people a very long time to discover that "the world do move."